

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Sanford B. Ladd School

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District, Pre-1970

## 2. Location

Street & number 3640 Benton Boulevard

N/A

not for publication

City or town Kansas City

N/A

vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson

Code 095

Zip code 64128

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title

*Director MSB*  
*Deputy SHPO*

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Sanford B. Ladd School  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
0	1	structures
		objects
1	1	<b>Total</b>

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/School

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Jacobethan

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: BRICK

roof: SYNTHETIC

other: TERRA COTTA

☒

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Sanford B. Ladd School

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

☒

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested) **Approved 8/21/17 (NPS #36753)**

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☒ Other

Name of repository: **Kansas City Public Library**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

### Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1912, 1922

### Significant Dates

1912

1922

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Smith, Charles A. (Architect)

L. Crosby & Sons (Builder - 1912)

Sanford B. Ladd School

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 2.4 acres

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.05921 -94.54721  
Latitude: Longitude:

3 Latitude: Longitude:

2 Latitude: Longitude:

4 Latitude: Longitude:

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

\_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rachel Consolloy, Director of Operations

organization Rosin Preservation, LLC

date July 16, 2021

street & number 1712 Holmes Street

telephone 816-472-4950

city or town Kansas City

state MO

zip code 64108

e-mail rachel@rosinpreservation.com

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**Sanford B. Ladd School**

Name of Property

**Jackson County, Missouri**

County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Sanford B. Ladd School**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson**

State: **Missouri**

Photographer: **Brad Finch, f-stop Photography**

Date

Photographed: **December 2020**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 16: Front (south) elevation, 1912 building and 1922 addition, view north.
- 2 of 16: South section of west elevation, 1922 addition, view east.
- 3 of 16: North and west elevations, 1922 addition, view southeast.
- 4 of 16: North elevation, 1912 building and 1922 addition, view southeast.
- 5 of 16: North and east elevations, 1911 building, 1922 addition and c.1990 addition, view southwest.
- 6 of 16: East elevation, 1912 building and c.1990 addition, view west.
- 7 of 16: Second floor, main corridor, 1912 building and 1922 addition, view west.
- 8 of 16: Second floor, main corridor, 1922 addition, view east.
- 9 of 16: First floor, west stair, 1922 addition, view southwest.
- 10 of 16: First floor, main corridor, main stair and offices, 1912 building, view south.
- 11 of 16: First floor, west stair to west entrance, 1922 addition, view northwest.
- 12 of 16: Second floor, typical classroom, 1922 addition, view southwest.
- 13 of 16: Second floor, typical classroom, 1922 addition, view northeast.
- 14 of 16: Ground floor, cafeteria, 1922 addition, view northeast.
- 15 of 16: Ground floor, gymnasium, 1922 addition, view southwest.
- 16 of 16: First floor, auditorium, 1922 addition, view northeast.

## Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

**Figure 1.** Context Map. Source: Google Maps, 2021.

**Figure 2.** Site Map. Source: Google Maps, 2021.

**Figure 3.** Ladd School Exterior photo map, annotated with building campaigns. Source: Source: Google Maps, 2021.

**Figure 4.** Ladd School Ground Floor and Mezzanine current plans and photo map, annotated with building campaigns and significant spaces. Source: Source: Kansas City Public Schools. "Ladd School As-built Plans." Architectural Drawings, n.d.

**Figure 5.** Ladd School First Floor current plans and photo map, annotated with building campaigns and significant spaces. Source: Kansas City Public Schools. "Ladd School As-built Plans." Architectural Drawings, n.d.

**Figure 6.** Ladd School Second Floor current plans and photo map, annotated with building campaigns and significant spaces. Source: Source: Kansas City Public Schools. "Ladd School As-built Plans." Architectural Drawings, n.d.

**Figure 7.** Ladd School Historic Ground Floor, 1912 and 1922 sections, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911-1921.

**Figure 8.** Ladd School Historic First Floor, 1912 section, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911.

**Figure 9.** Ladd School Historic First Floor, 1922 section, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1922.

Sanford B. Ladd School

Jackson County, Missouri

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- Figure 10.** Ladd School Historic Second Floor, 1912 section, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911.
- Figure 11.** Ladd School Historic Second Floor, 1922 section, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911-1922.
- Figure 12.** Ladd School, c.1915. Source: Kansas City, Missouri School District Records, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 13.** Rendering of completed Ladd School, 1921. Source: "Work Has Begun on Addition to Sanford B. Ladd School," *Kansas City Star*, October 12, 1921.
- Figure 14.** Detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Kansas City. Vol. 6, Sheet 761, 1917.
- Figure 15.** Detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Kansas City. Vol. 6, Sheet 761, 1950.
- Figure 16.** Ladd School Historic corridor corbels detail, 1912 section. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911.
- Figure 17.** Detail photo of corbels in 1912 section. Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.
- Figure 18.** Photo of leaded glass doors for built-in cabinets in 1912 classrooms. Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.
- Figure 19.** Photo of historic window wall on south side of second-floor corridor. Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.
- Figure 20.** Photo of historic window wall on north side of second-floor corridor. Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.

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Sanford B. Ladd School
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Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

## SUMMARY

The Sanford B. Ladd School (Ladd School) at 3640 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is a public elementary school building constructed in three phases, 1912, 1922, and c. 1990. The building anchors the south half of a property that occupies two-thirds of a city block in central Kansas City, surrounded by contemporary residential development (*Figures 1 and 2*). The building is two stories with a raised basement; the concrete foundation supports the concrete structure, brick walls, and flat roof. The two primary building episodes give the building an L-shaped plan, augmented by two small wings that project from the north elevation. The combined construction periods produced a school building that incorporates all the functions and design features of an Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era Elementary School property type, as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970." Unifying features across both building campaigns include the red brick walls with brown brick and cream-colored terracotta ornament that communicate the building's Jacobethan Revival details, such as shaped parapets, contrasting brickwork, pilaster capitals and bases, keystones, and pendants. Exterior alterations are limited to the replacement of windows and doors. On the interior, wide double-loaded corridors bisect the building to access the classrooms, the auditorium, the gymnasium, and the offices. Wide stairwells on either end of the building circulate vertically through all three floors. The classrooms have high ceilings with tall window openings lining at least one wall and transoms above the doors to facilitate the flow of air. The classroom configuration, along with the reinforced concrete structure, brick walls, and purpose-built auditorium and gymnasium, are essential to identifying this school as a Progressive Era Elementary School property type, as described in the MPDF. These character-defining features were designed to promote safety and hygiene, as well as the Progressive Era approach to education-by-doing using spaces dedicated to specialized subjects.

## ELABORATION

### SETTING

Ladd School anchors the south end of a property that occupies two-thirds of a city block bounded by Benton Boulevard, Walrond Avenue, East 36<sup>th</sup> Street and East 37<sup>th</sup> Street (*Figures 1 and 2*). The quiet tree-lined Benton Boulevard was developed as part of the city's original Parks and Boulevard System at the turn of the twentieth century. Benton Boulevard connects to two east-west components of the Parks and Boulevard System, Linwood Boulevard on the north and Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard (formerly Brush Creek Boulevard) on the south. The blocks surrounding Ladd School are narrow, rectangular blocks with the long sides oriented north-south. Modest early-twentieth century frame dwellings, interspersed with the occasional

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religious property, compose the dense neighborhood surrounding the school. Prospect Avenue forms a commercial corridor five blocks to the east.

A non-historic chain link fence encloses the Ladd School property (*Photo 1*). Mature deciduous trees line Benton Boulevard in the narrow easement strip between the public sidewalk and the street. The historic school building occupies the south third of the block while the remaining two thirds of the block is open space currently associated with the school. A narrow asphalt plaza fronts the south (primary) and east elevations of the building. Historically the space had brick pavers rather than asphalt. Behind the school, a non-historic asphalt parking lot and a separate asphalt-surface play area fill the remainder of the parcel historically associated with the school (*Photos 4-5*). Historically these areas have always been open, intended for play, although prior to asphalt they were macadam. The property historically included a large open area behind the school (now the parking lot and playground) that in the past was periodically used for temporary classroom buildings as well as a large garden that the students tended. Although the paved is identified as non-contributing due to its alterations or construction outside the period of significance, the current use of this area is consistent with the history of the school. Outside the boundary to the north of these hard surfaces, a large grassy ball field occupies the remainder of the block. This field was not historically associated with the school and is therefore not included in the boundary for the nominated property. The area containing the ballfield historically contained multiple independent parcels containing single-family dwellings of the same vintage as the surrounding blocks.

A wide concrete sidewalk connects the stairs at the main south entrance to a wide set of stairs that leads down to the public sidewalk that lines East 37<sup>th</sup> Street. The lower set of stairs has low stone wingwalls that abut the adjacent concrete retaining walls (*Photo 1*). The retaining wall runs along the east end of the south property line. The retaining wall turns the corner and runs along the east property line up to the stone wingwalls that frame the concrete stair that leads to the concrete sidewalk that accesses the east entrance (*Photo 6*). There is one additional set of concrete steps at the northeast corner of the paved area, at the northeast corner of the boundary. The west side of the property has one set of stairs that connects the public sidewalk to the asphalt area at the front of the building, and two short sets of stairs that connect the public sidewalk to the two west entrances. All four stairs have stone wingwalls (*Photos 2 and 3*).

**SANFORD B. LADD SCHOOL**

EXTERIOR

Ladd School is a two-story building with a raised basement and an irregular footprint (*Figures 3-6*). The L-shaped building consists of the main block running east-west and a large wing containing the gymnasium and auditorium extending northward from the west end of the main



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block. The east half of the main block was built in 1912 (*Photo 1*). The west half of the main block and the gymnasium/auditorium wing were constructed in 1922 (*Photos 1-3*). A short, squat wing projects northward from the center of the main block. This was historically the boiler room and assembly room constructed in 1912 (*Photo 4*). A longer one-story wing, constructed c. 1990, extends northward from the east end of the main block (*Photos 5 and 6*). The red brick walls have restrained Jacobethan Revival ornament with hints of Craftsman influence (*Photos 1, 2, and 6*). The unified façade of the main block does not express the two separate building campaigns (*Figures 7-11*).

The building has a concrete foundation, increasing amounts of which are exposed as the grade changes and the lot slopes down to the north and west. On the main block, terra cotta and stone beltcourses divide all elevations into three parts (*Photo 1*). A stone watertable above the concrete foundation and a terra cotta beltcourse below the first story windows divide the basement and first story, creating the base. The walls of the base above the concrete foundation are brick laid in Flemish bond with red stretchers and light-colored headers. A terra cotta beltcourse with geometric ornament wraps around the main building above the second-story windows, demarcating the shaft. The walls of the shaft (first and second stories) and the cap (parapet) are laid in Common bond with Flemish headers; the headers are a lighter color than the stretchers (*Photo 2*). Brown soldier bricks frame the panels between the first and second stories and in the parapet and form a solid band between the top of the shaft and the cap (between the second story and parapet). A terra cotta beltcourse runs above the band of soldier bricks. The parapet has red brick in Common bond with one central course of light-colored headers. Terra cotta coping caps the parapet.

The 1922 gymnasium/auditorium wing that extends from the west end of the north elevation has walls are Common bond with all the brick roughly the same red color. The one-story c. 1990 addition at the east end of the north elevation has brick walls with concrete trim that mimics the ornament and patterned brickwork (Flemish and Common bond with light-colored headers) of the adjacent 1912 main block. All the windows are non-historic aluminum replacement windows. The basement windows are one-over-one single-hung sash windows while the upper-story windows have two vertically stacked operable sashes and a fixed transom. The transom panels are opaque. The basement windows have the same configuration as they did historically. The upper-story windows have a configuration similar to what it was historically, except that the transom had four vertical lights instead of opaque panels. The replacement windows fill the historic openings. The single and paired slab metal doors on all elevations are non-historic. Plywood covers the glazed panels in these doors. The configuration of the current doors matches what it was historically, but they are replacement doors and frames.

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*South Elevation*

The primary (south) elevation has eighteen bays (*Photo 1*). The façade steps in and out every three bays; from west to east, Bays 4-6, 10-12, and 16-18 project slightly from the primary elevation, creating an east, center, and west pavilion and dividing the elevation into six parts. Bays 10-18 are the 1912 building while Bays 1-9 are the 1922 addition. The building is symmetrical around the primary entrance in the center pavilion (Bays 10-12), with an extra set of classrooms on the west end. Two-story brick pilasters define the bays in the upper two stories. The pilasters have plain limestone bases and terra cotta caps with simple geometric shapes. At the basement level, Bays 1-3, 10, 12, and 16-18 each contain a single window; Bays 4-6 contain pairs of windows; Bays 7-9 and 13-15 each contain a set of two single windows. At the upper stories, each bay contains a pair of windows with a single limestone sill, except Bays 10-12, which is described below. A tall parapet rises from the terra cotta beltcourse that encircles the building above the second-story windows. The parapet above the main entrance bays (Bays 10-12) is taller than the others and is described below. Brown soldier bricks and geometric terra cotta shapes ornament the parapet of the five sections that comprise the symmetrical portion of the building. The parapets above the east and west pavilions contain short tripartite windows, brown brick soldier course bands, and peaked coping. The parapet above Bays 1-3 at the west end has a flat parapet with only the light-colored header bricks as ornament.

The center pavilion (Bays 10-12) contains the main entry with a pair of non-historic metal doors with glazed upper panels. (*Photo 1*). Small, terra cotta-framed windows flank the wood-framed entry, which has a multi-light transom. The first story contains a limestone bay window. A limestone panel above the window has "Sanford B. Ladd School" carved in relief. Tall, narrow fresh air vents flanking the bay window are set within shallow, recessed terra cotta panels. The second story contains single narrow windows flanking a tripartite window. The tall parapet above the second story contains a center vent and blind outer panels, each framed with soldier course brick. Triangular terra cotta tiles ornament the outer panels. The coping above the blind panels is peaked while the coping above the vent is arched.

*West Elevation*

The west elevation has three sections, all of which were constructed in 1922 (*Photos 3-5*). The southernmost section is part of the main block and has a basement and two stories. The brickwork and terra cotta ornament are similar to that of the front (south) elevation. This section is not quite symmetrical around the west entrance pavilion that projects slightly. The basement level has six bays, with three single windows on the north side of the center pavilion, and a vent and window on the south side. The slightly recessed center entrance has a terra cotta frame inset with a pair of non-historic metal doors with a transom, and an adjacent opening that historically contained a window but now contains a vent. The stone panel above the door is

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inscribed "Sanford B. Ladd School." The first and second stories each contain four bays. The three bays to the north of the center pavilion each contain a pair of windows with one-over-one operable sashes and fixed opaque transoms, similar to the front elevation. The center pavilion has one bay at each story, containing three windows. The second-story windows have a terra cotta frame. These windows have segmental arches and a separate fixed smaller transom. Opaque panels fill the historic window openings at the second story of the center pavilion. The parapet above has the same darker brick ornament as the front and has a peaked coping.

A narrow two-story hyphen connects the gymnasium/auditorium wing to the north elevation of the main block. A stone-framed entrance with "AUDITORIUM" inscribed on the lintel and a short window above fills the first-story opening (*Photo 3*). The second story contains a pair of windows with an operable lower sash and an opaque top panel.

The 1922 gymnasium and auditorium wing has the concrete foundation that aligns with the main block and terra cotta bands above the gymnasium windows that align with the tops of the basement windows in the main block. The auditorium does not align with either of the upper stories of the main block, but the wing does have similar bands of terra cotta that frame a band of soldier course brick just below the parapet. The west elevation of this wing has five bays with simple two-story brick pilasters defining the bays above the concrete foundation. At the gymnasium level, Bays 1-4 have pairs of fixed one-over-one windows with opaque transoms. Bay 5 does not have any openings in the brick, but there is a small square window in the foundation. At the auditorium level above, Bay 1 contains a small single one-over-one window with a vent above. Bays 2-5 each contain a pair of one-over-one operable windows with separate opaque transoms. A terra cotta cornice and a much shorter parapet with terra cotta coping caps the gymnasium/auditorium wing.

*North Elevation*

The rear (north) elevation has a relatively flat façade at the main block with three projecting wings: the 1922 gymnasium/auditorium wing at the west end, the 1912 boiler room/Assembly Room wing at the center, and the one-story classroom wing built in 1990 at the east end (*Photos 4-5*). The brick and terra cotta ornament on the north elevation is similar to the front (south) elevation, but without any of the extra geometric pieces.

The gymnasium/auditorium wing at the west end of the north elevation has four bays (*Photos 3 and 4*). Two-story brick pilasters define the bays in the main part of the auditorium and gymnasium; none of the bays contain openings. A shorter stair tower is attached to the east side of the wing and contains a single one-over-one window at each story. The east side of the gymnasium/auditorium wing has five bays. At the gymnasium level, Bay 1 is blank while Bays 2-4 each contain a pair of fixed one-over-one windows with opaque transoms. Bay 5 is the

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attached stair tower and does not have any openings on the east side, but does have two windows and a pair of metal doors on the south side of the projecting stair tower. The spandrel area between the gymnasium and auditorium contains a pair of one-over-one windows in Bay 1. At the auditorium, Bays 1-4 each contain a pair of one-over-one operable windows with opaque transoms. The hyphen between the gymnasium/auditorium wing and the main block contains a sunken entrance with a pair of metal doors and a glass block transom. The hyphen contains two single windows at the upper levels.

The north elevation of the main block has four bays to the west of the Assembly Room wing. This section was constructed in 1922. At the basement, Bays 1, 3, and 4 contain pairs of one-over-one windows while Bay 2 contains a single one-over-one window and a single metal slab door. At the first and second stories, the, Bays 1 and 2 have sets of three one-over-one windows with opaque transoms while Bays 3 and 4 each have pairs of one-over-one windows with opaque transoms.

The boiler room/Assembly Room wing projects from the center of the main block and connects to the basement and first floor (*Photo 4*). The basement level has a concrete foundation and stone watertable, with Flemish bond brick above, similar to the front elevation. The basement level has one door and small square window on the west side of the wing, three bricked-in window openings on the north side, and four windows on the east side. The first story has Common bond brick, four one-over-one windows with opaque transoms on both the east and west sides, and a window and door with a metal fire escape stair on the north side. The hyphen connecting the Assembly Room wing to the main block contains two windows at each story and on both the east and west sides of the hyphen. The two chimneys rise above the center of the main block. Dark brick bands and triangular terra cotta pieces ornament the chimneys.

The main block on the east side of the Assembly Room wing has six bays, with Bays 1-3 in a projecting pavilion. This section of the building was constructed in 1912. Each bay contains a pair of one-over-one windows with opaque transoms. The east pavilion has decorative terra cotta at the pilaster capitals and the parapet, similar to the front (south) elevation. The one-story c.1990 wing covers the basement level of Bays 1-3.

The low, one-story wing constructed in c.1990 projects from the east side of the north elevation (*Photos 4 and 5*). The c.1990 wing has a concrete foundation and watertable and red Flemish bond brick. On the west side of the wing, squat brick pilasters define the five bays. Bays 1 and 2 each contain a set of four one-over-one windows while Bays 3 and 5 each have a single door flanked by glass block panels, and Bay 4 is glass block. These openings date to the construction of the addition and correspond to the interior corridor that runs along the west side of the addition. The north side of the c.1990 wing has two pairs of one-over-one windows with

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transoms. The north end of the corridor stops a little short of the north end of the classrooms. A narrow, recessed wall clad in stucco spans the distance between the classroom and the brick pilaster. This appears to be the original design of the addition and not an alteration. A concrete beltcourse caps the windows. The parapet has a peaked center portion.

*East Elevation*

The east elevation has two sections: the 1912 section and the one-story 1990 wing. The center pavilion on the east elevation projects outward slightly from the façade (*Photo 6*). It contains a wood-framed entry with a limestone nameplate. Tall, narrow one-over-one windows with opaque transoms flank the central window panel at the center of the pavilion. Within the panel there are arched windows with short, fixed panels above, all set in the terra cotta frames at the second story and short, square window openings at the first story. The raised basement contains six single one-over-one windows. The east elevation of the main block exhibits the same patterns of fenestration and materials as the primary elevation. The one-story c.1990 wing has the same masonry patterns as the 1912 building, with the Flemish bond brick and concrete banding. The c.1990 wing has four bays, with the outer two containing single one-over-one windows with transoms and the inner two bays containing pairs of one-over-one windows with transoms.

INTERIOR

The interior of the building is arranged around the main double-loaded east-west corridor in the main block (*Photos 7 and 8*). The three wings extend northwards from secondary corridors attached to the main corridors (*Figures 4-6*). Two open stairwells provide vertical circulation to all floors at the east and west ends of the corridor of the main block (*Photo 9*). The stair at the center of the south side of the main block connects the primary entrance at the basement level to just the first floor. Three sets of secondary stairs access the levels of the gymnasium/auditorium wing, as they do not align with the floors of the main block. The reinforced concrete building has plaster walls, wood trim, wood doors, and plaster ornament, all of which are historic. Non-historic finishes include some drywall partitions, carpet and VCT flooring over the historic concrete floors, and dropped ceiling grids of lay-in panels that conceal acoustical tiles adhered directly to the plaster. Bathroom finishes and fixtures have been updated. All the classrooms have historic vents and shafts that connect to the central ventilation system of the fan room and plenum in the basement and the "foul air room" in the attic, that were designed to circulate the air throughout the building (*visible at the center of Photo 13*).

*Basement*

The main entrance on the south elevation opens to a small vestibule with glazed brick walls and ceramic tile floors (*Figure 4*). Above the glazed brick walls, the walls and ceiling are plaster and have an elaborate crown molding with dentils. All the vestibule finishes are original except for the exterior doors. Paired wood doors with sidelights and large transoms open into the center

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stair hall. The stairs lead from the basement up to the main corridor on the first floor (*Photo 10*). The concrete stairs have plaster knee walls with wide wood caps and additional non-historic wrought iron railings. Doors in the east and west walls of the stair hall lead to the basement rooms. The main entrance, stair hall, and the rest of the building to the east were constructed in 1912. The rest of the building to west was constructed in 1922.

The east door in the stair hall opens to the former Girls' Toilet that has been converted to two large bathrooms. This entire room was constructed as the Girls' Toilet in 1912 and remained as such in 1922 (*Figure 7*). A pair of doors was added to the northeast corner of the Girls' Toilet in 1922 to connect it to a small hall to the north. To the east are two single classrooms that flank the east stairwell. These two classrooms retain their historic configurations and were historically the Manual Training room (north) and Domestic Science room (south) in 1912, and the Sewing room and Cooking room, respectively, in 1922. The east stairwell connects to a small vestibule for the east entrance, similar to the main entrance vestibule. The fan room, plenum, and mechanical room are at the center of the main block in the 1912 section. To the north of these spaces is a non-historic double-loaded corridor that leads to the 1922 section of the building. The east end of the corridor, the room to the north of it, and a short secondary corridor were historically the Boys' Toilet (1912) and then the Girls' Play Room (1922). The historic door at the northeast corner of the room originally opened to the exterior, but currently opens from that short secondary corridor to the single-loaded corridor of the c.1990 wing. North of the stair hall and the mechanical rooms is the original boiler room. The floor level of the boiler room is below the basement level, to provide additional ceiling height for the large boilers.

In the 1922 section, the non-historic main corridor jogs southward and connects to an entrance on the north elevation and the west stairwell, which also has a vestibule for the west entrance that is similar but smaller than the main entrance vestibule. The cafeteria and kitchen span the full length of the south side of the 1922 section (*Photo 14*). Historically these rooms were the Girls' Play Room in the east third and Manual Training Rooms in the west two-thirds. The partitions between the rooms were removed to create the cafeteria and kitchen. It is unclear when this alteration was made, but it is not historic. The spaces that were designed as the Boys' Toilet and the L-shaped Boys' Play Room on the north side of the main corridor have been reconfigured into four smaller rooms flanking the main corridor and the secondary corridor leading to the single door in the north wall. The single north entrance was the historic entrance to the exterior from the Boys' Toilet. These exterior doors to the toilets and playrooms were common for Progressive Era schools, as they allowed the students easy access to the building from the rear (north) play areas.

A wide secondary corridor at the west end of the main corridor connects the main block to the gymnasium/auditorium wing, through the hyphen. The hyphen contains two stairwells: one

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connects to the exterior west entrance while the other connects to the various levels of the main block. Small storage rooms and locker rooms line the secondary corridor. The storage room on the west side was historically the dispensary while the current locker room was constructed as the girls' locker room, which historically contained showers that have since been removed. A pair of historic wood doors at the north end of the corridor opens to the gymnasium. The gymnasium has wood floors, which may not be the original wood floors, but wood is the historic finish (*Photo 15*). The walls are plaster and have a high wood chair rail. The ceilings are the exposed concrete structure with the additional large steel I-beams that span the large open space. A single door at the northeast corner of the gymnasium accesses the attached stair tower that connects to the auditorium. Both sets of stairs in the hyphen connect to the mezzanine level that provides access to the gymnasium balcony. The balcony has fixed wood bleachers (*Photo 15*). There are two rooms beneath the bleachers, accessible from the gymnasium floor. The west room was historically the equipment room and is now storage. The east room was historically the boys' locker room that contained a shower. This room is now storage as well.

The c.1990 wing contains two classrooms that have VCT flooring, concrete block walls, and dropped ceilings with lay-in acoustical tiles. Each of these classrooms has two single-user toilet rooms. The historic doorway utilized for the c.1990 wing connection was the historic door from the Boys' Toilets that originally occupied this space, directly to the exterior, as was common for Progressive Era Schools. The original Girls' Toilet accessed the exterior through the main stair hall and south entrance.

*First Floor*

The first floor has a wide double-loaded corridor that runs east-west (*Figure 5*). Classrooms flank the long, straight corridor. The corridors have VCT covered concrete floors with integral concrete bases, plaster walls, and varnished wood chair rails. Dropped grids with acoustical tiles hang from the ceilings, but are kept high, between the structural beams (*Photo 8*). The 1912 portion of the corridor has historic decorative plaster corbels at the beams (*Figures 16 and 17*). The classroom entrances retain their historic wood doors with partial glazing and large operable transoms.

The classrooms in the 1912 section have historic attached cloak rooms that access both the corridor and the classroom. The narrow cloak rooms often have non-historic shelving and a historic shallow closet. These classrooms also have historic built-in cabinets with wood casing and wood panel and leaded glass doors (*Figure 18*). The 1922 classrooms have a historic shallow wood case, like the built-in cabinets in the 1912 section. The 1922 classrooms do not have separate cloak rooms; they have recessed "wardrobe" spaces built into one wall. The wardrobes now have non-historic cabinetry installed within them (*Photo 13*). The classrooms

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retain their historic window and door trim as well as the wood baseboards. Some classrooms retain the wood chair rail. All the chalkboard casing had been removed during a previous renovation; non-historic aluminum framed chalkboards line the classroom walls. The classrooms have either carpet or VCT flooring, both of which are non-historic. The non-historic dropped ceilings are kept high and are held back slightly from the windows.

The principal's office historically occupied a room at the top of a short flight of concrete stairs above the main south stair hall and entrance, in the 1912 section (*Photo 10, Figure 8*). Historic multi-light windows line the wall of the office. The adjacent room to the east also contains offices and is connected internally to the original office (*Figure 5*). This room has a large window into the open stair well and a more elaborate corridor entrance with sidelights and transoms. This entrance and the use of the space as an office was not identified as such on the original plans, but may have been converted when the 1922 section was built because the interior partitions appear to be historic plaster with wood trim. Two additional classrooms, one each of the 1912 and 1922 sections, was converted to offices with non-historic drywall partitions and wood trim (*Figures 5, 8, and 9*). One additional classroom in the 1922 section was converted to two non-historic bathrooms with concrete block walls (*Figure 5*).

Across from the original office is a narrow corridor that leads to what was historically the Assembly Room, part of the 1912 section. This large open room has two historic built-in wood cases, plaster walls with wood trim, carpet, and a dropped ceiling. This room was converted to the library, its most recent function, at an unknown time, although it was likely converted shortly after 1922 when the auditorium was constructed.

A secondary corridor at the west end of the main corridor, in the 1922 section, contains the wide stair that leads up to the auditorium entrance. Two pairs of multi-light wood doors open to the back of the auditorium, where the floor begins to slope down to the stage at the north end of the room (*Photo 16*). The auditorium has concrete floors and plaster walls with wood chair rail and integrated concrete bases. The coffered plaster ceiling has boxed beams. School house-style lights hang from chains within the coffers. The auditorium retains its historic wood and metal seats. The wood stage has a simple, rectangular proscenium.

### *Second Floor*

The second floor is similar to the first floor in configuration and finishes (*Figure 6*). The structural beams are not visible in this corridor, so the entire ceiling is a non-historic dropped ceiling, although it is kept relatively high (*Photos 7 and 8*). There are no decorative plaster corbels on the second floor. Classrooms line the double-loaded corridor while the individual classrooms have historic partially glazed wood doors and operable transoms. Classrooms in the 1912 section have cloak rooms and built-in cabinets while the 1922 classrooms have shallow



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cabinets and wardrobes with non-historic cabinets. These classrooms all have non-historic carpeted floors, dropped ceilings held back from the windows, and non-historic chalkboards. They retain historic wood bases, window and door casing, and chair rail. One classroom in the 1922 section was converted to bathrooms, like the floor below (*Figure 6*). All the rest of the classrooms on the second floor retain their historic function and configuration. There are two rooms at the center of the corridor, or at the west end of the 1912 section, that have a row of multi-light operable windows that face the corridor (*Figure 6*). The south room is a single classroom (*Figure 19*); the north room is a narrow room originally designated as the Teachers' Room, flanked by two smaller storage rooms (*Figure 20*).

**Parking Lot**

**Non-Contributing Structure**

Two rectangular asphalt lots cover the center third of the block, from the north façade of the 1922 addition to the north edge of the historic parcel (*Photo 4*). The west lot is a parking lot with a driveway connecting to Bellefontaine Avenue to the west. The east lot is a play area and has a short concrete sidewalk connecting the asphalt to the northwest corner of the c. 1990 addition (*Figure 3*). This area was historically associated with the school and was open space. Prior to the construction of the 1922 section, this area had up to four wood frame buildings erected as temporary classrooms. After the 1922 section was constructed, the temporary classroom buildings were removed, and the area was macadamized for use as a play area.<sup>1</sup> Between 1960 and 1963, two one-story metal buildings were constructed as temporary classrooms. The temporary buildings were removed, and the area paved for parking and play in association with the c. 1990 wing. The parking lot is non-contributing because it has lost integrity. The former open, unfenced play area is now terraced and subdivided by a non-historic fence. Non-historic asphalt covers the parking lot.

INTEGRITY & REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Ladd School retains excellent integrity to convey its significance as an excellent example of an Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era Elementary School property type, as defined in the MPDF "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970." Per the MPDF, an eligible Progressive Era school must retain the following:

- Historic form and massing, including roof form;
- Historic exterior materials;
- Interior (auditorium/assembly room and gymnasium) and exterior recreation areas;
- Historic fenestration patterns, although windows and doors may have been replaced;
- Basic interior configuration of corridors and stairwells; and

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- Additions that are sympathetic to the original design in form and materials may not compromise the integrity of the resource.<sup>2</sup>

Ladd School meets all of the above requirements, with the exception of the alteration to the former play area on the north side of the building, now the non-contributing parking lot. The building remains in its historic location and setting surrounded by early twentieth century residential neighborhoods. It retains its historic design, materials, and workmanship that convey its historic educational function and the period of significance tied to the dates of construction. Ladd School retains the historic design features that were central to the Progressive Era educational movement, specifically the emphasis on safety and hygiene. This was achieved using non-combustible materials (concrete and brick), multiple wide stairs to facilitate egress in the event of a fire, and integrated ventilation systems. In addition to tall operable windows lining the perimeter walls of the classroom and operable transoms above the classroom doors, each classroom had ventilation shafts that connected to the central system, from the basement plenum and fan room to the "foul air room" in the attic. It retains the double-loaded corridors lined with classrooms and the purpose-built gymnasium and auditorium. The original play areas in front of the building remain open while the larger rear play area is terraced and subdivided, although both sections remain open. Additionally, classrooms dedicated to specialized subjects are extant, at least in configuration, such as sewing and domestic science/cooking rooms on the ground floor in the 1912 section. The 1922 Manual Training and Girls' Play rooms were converted to the cafeteria and are therefore no longer decipherable. This alteration does not impact the ability of the building to convey its significance as a Progressive Era school. The classrooms on the upper floors were not identified as specialized spaces, other than classrooms, but most are intact, except for the two former classrooms that flank the historic office on the first floor, and the northwest classrooms in the 1922 section, which were converted to bathrooms. Most historic finishes are retained throughout the building and the only interior alterations are the conversion of two classrooms to offices and two to bathrooms, although the historic partitions remain extant and involve only the construction of non-historic partitions. The construction of the c.1990 wing is a sensitive addition that utilized an existing door as the connection point and covers only a small portion of the rear elevation at the basement level. On the exterior, the c.1990 one-story wing incorporates the design elements of the historic building to create a compatible addition. The building clearly communicates feelings and associations with its historic function and significance as an Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era elementary school designed and built for the Kansas City Missouri School District.

<sup>1</sup> While there are a few historic photos of other schools that show play equipment, such as slides or jungle-gyms, the historic plans and photos of Ladd School do not indicate that there was any play equipment in these areas.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel (Consolloy) Nugent, "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970," *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Properties Documentation Form* (2012), F-51 – F-52.

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Ladd School meets all the registration requirements laid out in the MPDF "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970" for the property type "Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era School (1900-1940)", property subtype "Elementary Schools."<sup>3</sup> The building was constructed for the Kansas City Missouri School District prior to 1970 and stands with the current and historic boundaries of the Kansas City Missouri School District. Additionally:

- Ladd School retains its historic form and massing, including the flat roof. All the sections constructed during the period of significance are extant. The c.1990 addition is relatively small and does not significantly alter the historic form or massing.
- The school retains its historic exterior materials, specifically brick with stone and terra cotta ornament.
- Ladd School retains the historic interior and exterior recreation spaces. The gymnasium and auditorium are extant and relatively unchanged since they were constructed. The historically open areas in front of and behind the school are extant. They have been paved with asphalt, but they were historically brick (front) and macadam (rear), so there had always been some manmade material in those locations.
- The building retains its historic fenestration patterns. The windows themselves have been replaced, but the historic openings are intact. The existing non-historic windows are not necessarily historically appropriate, but the configuration is similar to what it was historically with one-over-one operable sashes and fixed transoms. Only the three windows in the north elevation of the boiler room have been infilled with brick.
- The basic interior configuration of corridors and stairwells is intact. Some of the stairwells received an additional wrought iron railing atop the plaster and wood railing, but this does not impact the configuration of the stairwell.
- The building does have a non-historic addition, but it is sympathetic to the original design in form and materials and thus does not compromise the integrity of the nominated building. The c.1990 addition mimics the brick coursing (Flemish bond) and contrasting banding of the basement level of the main block. The addition is only one story that is level with the basement and is attached to the rear of the building. While this is the only building on the block and thus visible from the public right-of-way on all sides, it is not visible from the front of the building.

<sup>3</sup> Rosin and Nugent, F-51 – F-52.

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### SUMMARY

Sanford B. Ladd School (Ladd School) at 3640 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is locally significant under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE. Ladd School is significant as an excellent example of the Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era Elementary School property type, as defined by the MPDF "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri Public School District Pre-1970." Ladd School possesses the distinct characteristics of this property type, which represents a significant period when the physical design of school buildings reflected educational and social priorities of the Progressive Era. The two-story brick and concrete building was constructed in three phases. The two primary building phases occurred between 1912 and 1922. A one-story wing was added to the rear of the building in c. 1990. Charles A. Smith, architect for the Kansas City School Board, designed the entire building, which was constructed in two phases, as funding and enrollment allowed, with the distinctive characteristics of Progressive Era public school design. Ladd School retains the features that emphasized safety and cleanliness, achieved through materials selection, ventilation, and fenestration patterns that maximized natural light and fresh air in the classrooms. The fireproof structure has concrete floors, brick walls, wide corridors, and open stairwells. Ladd School retains the historic interior and exterior recreation spaces, specifically the auditorium, gymnasium, and open play areas around the building, which was a central tenet of Progressive Era education. The building clearly represents its historic function and property type as a public elementary school built in the early twentieth century. The period of significance for Ladd School is 1912 and 1922, beginning with the date of construction for the first section of the building, the east section of the main block, and ending with the construction of the west section of the building and the gymnasium/auditorium wing.

### ELABORATION

#### PROGRESSIVE ERA EDUCATION AND THE KANSAS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Progressive Era was a period of time in the early twentieth century when the country, spurred by the enormous growth generated during the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century, studied, developed, and implemented a variety of policies and practices to improve the lives of its citizens. As explained in the MPDF context "Public Education in the United States (1776-1970)," education was a central component of those policies and practices, as it was believed to be the driving force in the social and economic successes of the early twentieth century and essential for producing engaged and informed citizens.<sup>4</sup> One of the most meaningful changes that occurred during this time was an overhaul of labor laws, particularly as they applied to children. States passed child labor laws that included compulsory education,

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which greatly increased the number of children enrolled in elementary school and the number who went on to high school. During this time, educators re-evaluated both the curriculum and the physical plant to bring both in line with this movement focused on the general betterment of society. The curriculum shifted from an emphasis on rote memorization of patterns and facts to a process of learning by doing.<sup>5</sup> In addition to traditional academic subjects, curricula expanded to include vocational training, which typically included manual training and domestic science.<sup>6</sup> There was also a push to incorporate creative and artistic subjects, as well as recreation.

In the early years of the Progressive Era, educators evaluated the existing stock of school facilities for how well they could accommodate an expanded curriculum. Educators also evaluated the existing buildings against the new standards for safety, health, and hygiene, developed to address concerns about fire and infectious diseases. When many nineteenth century schools were found to be insufficient on both accounts, the solution was to build a fleet of new schools. School districts across the country embarked on building campaigns to construct new schools using construction materials such as reinforced concrete, brick, clay tile and finishes such as glazed tile and polished concrete, all of which were selected for their fireproof and hygienic qualities.<sup>7</sup> Wide corridors and stairs to accommodate efficient egress and enhanced ventilation systems to facilitate the circulation of air through the building became the standard for Progressive Era schools. Architects also began designing schools with dedicated spaces for specialized subjects, such as manual training and domestic science, as well as areas for recreational activities, specifically the gymnasium, auditorium, and open play areas around the building.

Kansas City was no exception, as explained in the MPDF context "Public Education in Kansas City, Missouri (1867-1970)." The city limits expanded significantly just after the turn of the twentieth century when the city added roughly thirty-four square miles, predominantly east and south of the previous boundary.<sup>8</sup> The Kansas City Missouri School District paralleled the City in the expansion of its boundaries. In addition to the growth of the physical area, the population also grew exponentially, which translated to enrollment nearly doubling to 46,700 students between 1901 and 1915.<sup>9</sup> The pre-1900 schools were not designed to accommodate that many students and were not located in the areas that were expanding. School buildings were required in newly platted areas buzzing with home construction. The Kansas City Board of Education was constantly trying to keep pace with the growing population, proposing multiple bond issues

<sup>4</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-3.

<sup>5</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-4.

<sup>6</sup> While the 1922 Manual Training room was combined with the 1922 Girls' Play Room and converted to the cafeteria, the 1912 Manual Training Room became the sewing room and the domestic science room became the cooking room, both of which are intact.

<sup>7</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-5.

<sup>8</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-16.

<sup>9</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-16.

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to fund the necessary construction.<sup>10</sup> Between 1900 and 1910, the District constructed five elementary schools, one high school, and several additions; between 1910 and 1915, the District constructed thirteen elementary schools, one high school, and four building additions, including Ladd School.<sup>11</sup> Population growth and the demand for school facilities did not abate in the 1920s, resulting in significant overcrowding in the schools. It was the decade during which the most aggressive building campaign occurred. A total of \$21 million in bonds was issued to build twenty-five new schools and at least eighteen additions, including the 1922 addition to the nominated building.<sup>12</sup> The new schools constructed in the early twentieth century were distinctly different from their nineteenth century predecessors and designed to reflect the tenets of the Progressive Era educational movement, such as the use of fireproof construction and the inclusion of spaces dedicated specific courses of study or recreation, as described below. Many of them were built in phases, as funding and population growth in the surrounding area would dictate expansion. The District either built temporary frame buildings to house additional classrooms or moved an existing frame classroom building from another property until a permanent building could be erected.

#### EARLY-TWENTIETH CENTURY SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE

As stated on page E-28 of the MPDF under the context “Public School Buildings in Kansas City, Missouri (1867-1970),” Progressive Era schools utilized standardized building designs and educational requirements to ensure that all students in the school district received the same style and quality of education. Books of standard plans for school buildings, such as those written by Wilbur Thoburn Mills and Fletcher Dresslar, became popular in the early twentieth century. The books called for schools to be two to three stories tall with a symmetrical façade, articulated entrances, and a flat roof. Brick walls with limestone, pressed metal, or terra cotta trim should clad the fireproof concrete structure.<sup>13</sup> Retrained ornament in one of the revival architectural styles popular during this period was appropriate to adorn exterior walls.<sup>14</sup>

Materials and design elements reflected a concern for safety. Both Mills and Dresslar emphasized the importance of using fireproof materials, such as concrete, steel, and masonry. As described in the MPDF, exterior cladding was often brick, concrete, or stone. Wide corridors and stairs allowed for efficient evacuation during an emergency.<sup>15</sup> Classroom and corridor

<sup>10</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-16.

<sup>11</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-16.

<sup>12</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-17-18.

<sup>13</sup> Wilbur T. Mills, *American School Building Standards* (Columbus: Franklin Educational Publishing Company, 1910), 34.

<sup>14</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-28.

<sup>15</sup> Fletcher B. Dresslar, *American Schoolhouses* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 53-56.

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finishes incorporated minimal amounts of wood trim to reduce the amount of combustible material.<sup>16</sup>

Progressive Era schools contained multiple classrooms arranged on either side of a double-loaded corridor. Classrooms had banks of large windows on at least one wall that admitted natural light and fresh air. Classroom doors with operable transoms allowed additional light and fresh air into the room. Schoolwide ventilation systems utilized large fans to push fresh air into classrooms, offices, and corridors. Gymnasiums, auditoriums, and libraries promoted cultural and physical education while manual training, science, and home economics classrooms promoted the teaching of specialized coursework.<sup>17</sup>

Ladd School is a highly intact example of an Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era School, specifically the Elementary School subtype, constructed for the Kansas City, Missouri School District as described in the MPDF. Kansas City School Board architect Charles A. Smith designed the school, which was built in two phases as the neighborhood's population grew, constructing the east half of the main block in 1912 (*Figures 7-9, 10, 12*). The west half of the main block and the west wing, constructed in 1922, contained classrooms as well as the stacked auditorium and gymnasium (*Figures 7-9, 11, 13*). Ladd School retains the exterior and the interior features that exemplify a Progressive Era elementary school.

The most important exterior features are the fireproof masonry construction and open space surrounding the building, designated for recreational play. Additionally, the two-story building exhibits a simplified version of the three-part base-shaft-capital façade configuration typical of early twentieth century historical revival styles. A limestone beltcourse caps the concrete base of the ground-floor level. Brick pilasters with simple limestone bases and terra cotta capitals divide the façade into regular bays in the two-story "shaft" portion. A shaped parapet with brown brick and terra cotta ornament forms the "capital." The front (south) elevation of the main block is symmetrical around a prominent entrance, a common feature in many public school buildings constructed during this era, as stated in the MPDF.<sup>18</sup> The tapestry brick is laid in a variety of bond patterns across the building to create visual interest and distinguish spaces. The massing, symmetry, and restrained Jacobethan Revival ornament communicate the simple, refined historical revival styles often employed on civic and institutional buildings from the early twentieth century.

The interior of Ladd School contains the important identifying features of a Progressive Era public grade school building. As described in the MPDF, these features reflect a concern for

<sup>16</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-29.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, E-29.

<sup>18</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-28.

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safety and health.<sup>19</sup> Wood doors with large, operable transoms line the long, double-loaded corridors on each floor, increasing light and ventilation in the classrooms. The wide corridors, open stairwells, and building structure are concrete, a fireproof material. The perimeter walls of the spacious classrooms contain banks of tall windows. The windows and transoms complement the building's integrated ventilation system. Tall louvered vents flanking the main entry on the front elevation draw fresh air into the building and stacks at the rear vent stale air. These specially designed measures to improve safety, cleanliness, and ventilation address issues central to the Progressive Movement.

The design of Ladd School clearly illustrates these standards. It is a fireproof concrete structure with wide corridors and stairwells. On the exterior, the brick walls have decorative terra cotta and ornamental brick patterning that present restrained elements of Jacobethan Revival styling. Classrooms line the wide, double-loaded corridor. The classrooms have banks of windows and large transoms above the doors to provide natural light and promote air circulation. A historic addition contains the auditorium and gymnasium. The basement historically contained a manual training room and playrooms as well as the restrooms. There are no extant finishes from those early restrooms, except for the exterior doors that provided easy access to the building from the rear (north) play areas, as was common for Progressive Era schools.

#### HISTORY OF LADD SCHOOL

Named in honor of Sanford B. Ladd, an attorney who served the School Board for over forty years, the first Ladd School was a frame building constructed in 1910.<sup>20</sup> Although this area was included in the 1897 expansion of the city limits, it was slow to develop at first. The first plats for neighboring areas were filed in 1910 and the last filed in 1919. Shortly after platting, construction began on the modest single-family dwellings that eventually lined the streets on the surrounding blocks. By 1912, a new masonry building opened to serve 256 pupils and six teachers (*Figures 12, 14*). Although the school contained twelve classrooms, additional room was needed to meet the growing student population. A 1922 addition, which costs approximately \$276,000, provided twelve additional classrooms, allowing the school population to grow to eight hundred pupils and twenty teachers (*Figures 13, 15*).<sup>21</sup> The two-story addition included a 50' x 63' gymnasium, an auditorium to seat eight hundred with a 16' x 50' stage, boys' and girls' playrooms, and manual training rooms.<sup>22</sup> The Kansas, City Missouri School District constructed the c.1990 addition and likely made the other interior alterations, finishes

<sup>19</sup> Rosin and Nugent, E-29.

<sup>20</sup> Unknown Title, *Kansas City Star*, July 20, 1910, Microfilm, Mounted Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>21</sup> "Work Has Begun on Addition to Sanford B. Ladd School," *Kansas City Star*, October 12, 1921, Microfilm, Mounted Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>22</sup> Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, "Sanford B. Ladd School," *Architectural/Historic Inventory Survey Form*, 1989.



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upgrades, and configuration changes at the same time as part of the District's transition to magnet schools. Ladd School served the children first as a neighborhood school and later as an African-centered magnet school until it closed in 2010.<sup>23</sup> Since then, the property has been vacant.

### COMPARABLE PROPERTIES

In addition to Ladd School, there are eight extant Kansas City Missouri School District buildings designed in the first decade of the twentieth century to have a symmetrical façade and incorporate early tenets of the Progressive Era.<sup>24</sup> These buildings are scattered through the city in the areas where the city was expanding around the turn of the twentieth century. Most have a construction history similar to Ladd School, where one section of the building was built first and the rest was built during a later campaign, including a later gymnasium/auditorium wing. They were all designed by Charles A. Smith, as the school district architect at the time, thus they all include features of the Progressive Era. All have a linear configuration with classrooms organized around a central corridor. Allen School (706 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street) has only the first section (the east half) completed, and Norman School (3521 Summit Street) has only the original main block completed.<sup>25</sup> There was no gymnasium/auditorium wing constructed for Norman School. Of the eight buildings, four continue to function as elementary schools, although not all are still owned by the Kansas City Missouri School District. The other four have been repurposed as housing; these are the same resources that are already listed in the National Register. Two schools (Bancroft (4300 Tracy Avenue) and Norman) are listed individually, while Faxon (4301 Paseo Boulevard) is a contributing resource to the Squier Park Historic District and D.A. Holmes (3004 Benton Boulevard) is a contributing resource to the Santa Fe Place Historic District. Harrison School (414 Wallace Avenue) has a large non-historic addition on the rear, although it is low and does not significantly impact the integrity of the school. All these schools have replacement windows, similar to Ladd School. Ladd School stands out among this list of similar contemporary schools, as the interior configuration and finishes are substantially intact, making it an excellent example of the Early Twentieth Century/ Progressive Era Elementary School property type.

<sup>23</sup> Magnet schools were still part of the Kansas City, Missouri School District. The building remained a public school until it closed in 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Rosin and Nugent, Appendix A 84-87. The "five-part" descriptor refers to the symmetrical façade that includes the center entrance pavilion, with flanking recessed bays and projecting outer bays. For some schools, the building was constructed with these five parts in the initial construction campaign while most schools were constructed in phases. Usually, the first phase includes the center entrance pavilion and one set of recessed and outer bays, and the second phase included the balancing recessed and outer bays. For Ladd School, the 1912 section included that typical initial phase while the 1922 addition completed the five-part façade, but also added another section beyond the five parts.

<sup>25</sup> Both buildings are extant. Norman School was listed in the National Register on January 15, 2014, under the same MPDF.

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**CHARLES A. SMITH, ARCHITECT**

Charles Ashley Smith was born in Ohio in March 1866 but moved with his family to Iowa in 1874.<sup>26</sup> He began his architectural career at age 16 as a draftsman and quickly gained experience. Smith was appointed as architect for the Board of Education for the Kansas City Missouri School District in 1898. Charles A. Smith retired from the position in 1936, having designed over 50 renovations and new school buildings in 38 years. Smith designed public elementary, middle, and high school buildings in a wide variety of exterior cladding materials, sizes, floor plans, and popular architectural styles. Early in the twentieth century, Smith was noted for designs that incorporated "scientific ventilation and other sanitary features."<sup>27</sup> Although there is no reference to specific systems, these features were reportedly adopted in other public-school designs across the country.<sup>28</sup> In addition to being a member of the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Smith was also a member of the American Society of Heating & Ventilating Engineers.<sup>29</sup> Charles Smith died in 1948.

**CONCLUSION**

The Sanford B. Ladd School at 3640 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent intact example of an Early Twentieth Century/Progressive Era Elementary School property type under the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970." The first section of Ladd School was constructed in 1912, with a large addition in 1922, as an elementary school building with all the features and amenities recommended for public schools of the Progressive Era. Ladd School retains the distinctive Progressive Era characteristics integral to its design. Notable elements include the fireproof brick and concrete structure; wide corridors and stairwells; an integrated ventilation system; exterior and interior recreation spaces, specifically the exterior play space, the gymnasium, and the auditorium; and extant spaces for specialized instruction, including the sewing and cooking rooms on the ground level in the 1912 section. Most of the classrooms retain their original configurations and finishes. The corridors, auditorium, and gymnasium are substantially intact. The massing, materials, and extant historical revival details, including the tripartite façade organization and the sparse brick, limestone, and terra cotta ornament, clearly communicate the function of this building as a Progressive Era elementary school. The building is an excellent representation of its property type, which was significant as a reflection of the importance of the Progressive Era in broadening the public school curriculum and promoting improvements to safety, health, and hygiene through the design of the physical plant.

<sup>26</sup> Carrie Westlake Whitney, "Charles A. Smith," *Kansas City Missouri: Its History and Its People. 1800-1909*, Vol. II (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1908) 643.

<sup>27</sup> "Charles A. Smith," *Men of Affairs in Greater Kansas City, 1912* (Kansas City, MO: The Kansas City Press Club, 1912) 224.

<sup>28</sup> "Charles A. Smith," 224.

<sup>29</sup> Whitney, 644.

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Microfilm, Mounted Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

The nominated property occupies two-thirds of the city block bounded by East 36<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, Benton Boulevard on the east, East 37<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, and Bellefontaine Avenue on the west. The north boundary aligns with the historic property boundary and includes the open space on the north side of the building, historically associated with the school. The boundary does not include the public sidewalks that line each street.

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

The proposed boundaries are the current parcel associated with the resource. The boundary includes the contributing resource, the school building, and the one non-contributing resource, the parking lot and asphalt play area, which was constructed outside the period of significance. The building and the parking lot comprise the historic parcel associated with the school. The boundary does not include the grassy ballfields that are part of the current school boundary, as they were not historically associated with the school and contained multiple parcels built up with single-family dwellings until the 1990s.

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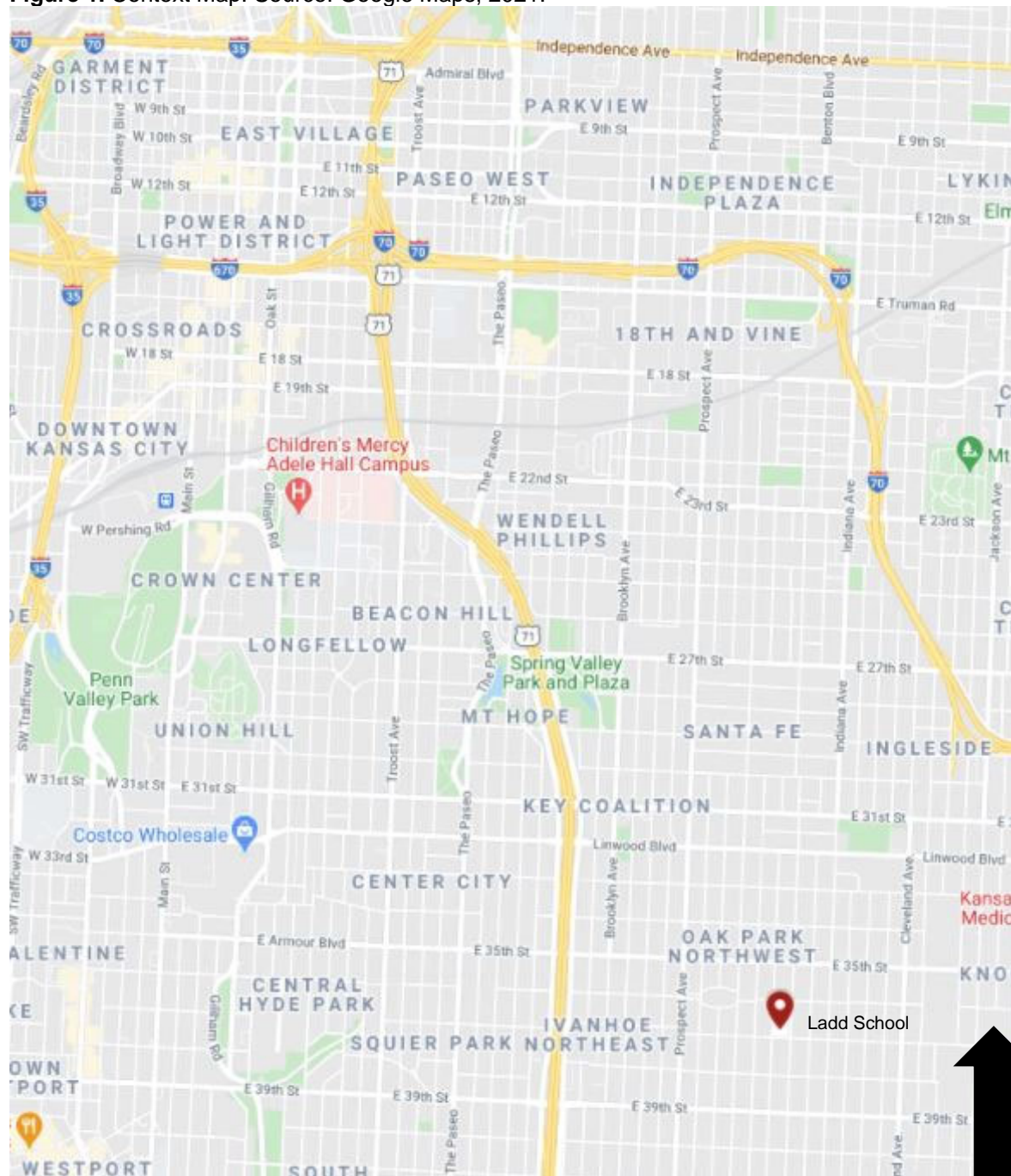
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**Figure 1.** Context Map. Source: Google Maps, 2021.



Ladd School  
3640 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri  
39.059169°  
-94.547236°



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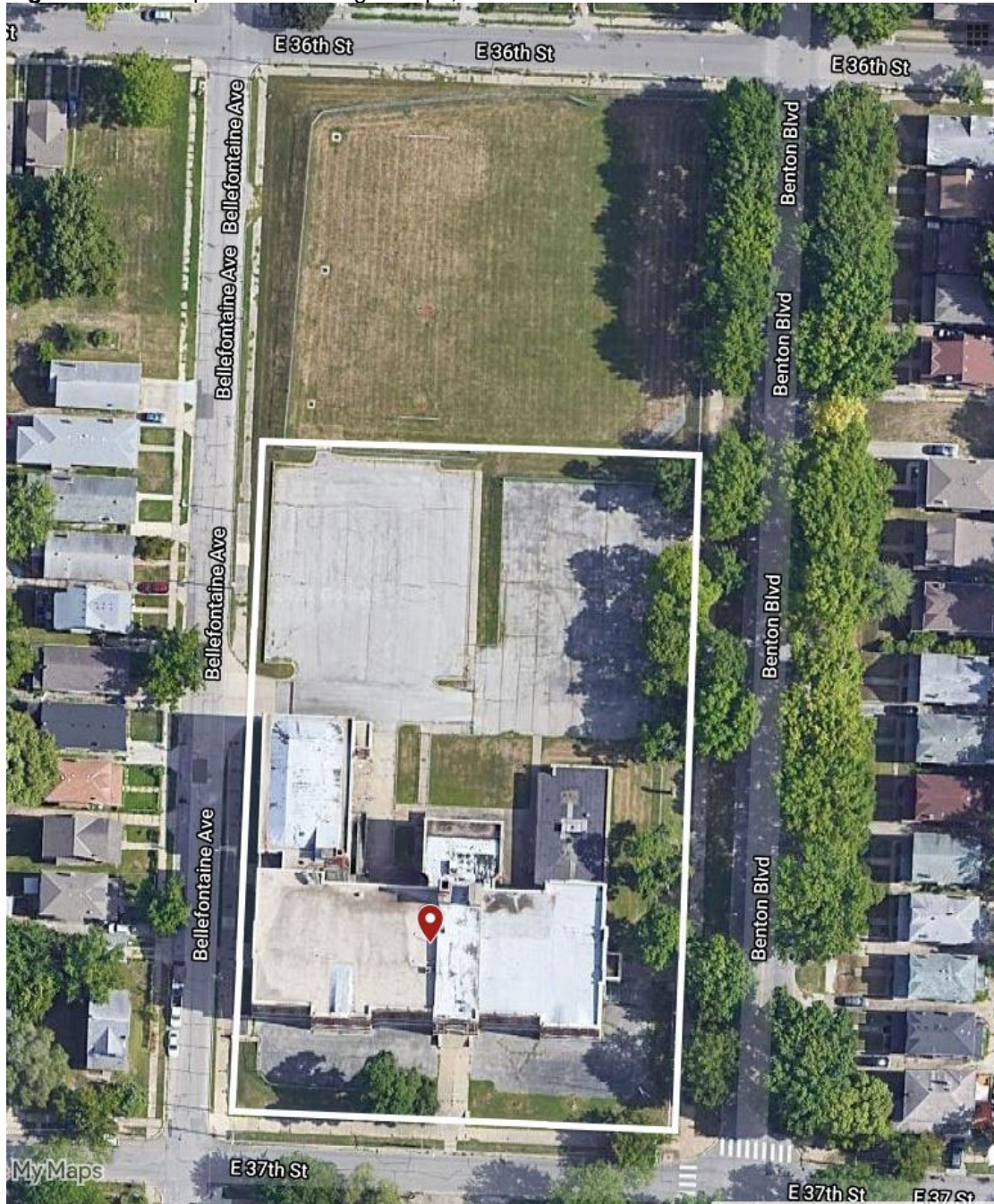
Jackson County, Missouri

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**Figure 2.** Site Map. Source: Google Maps, 2021.



Ladd School  
3640 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri  
39.059210°  
-94.547210°



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**Figure 3.** Ladd School Exterior photo map, annotated with building campaigns. Source: Source: Google Maps, 2021.





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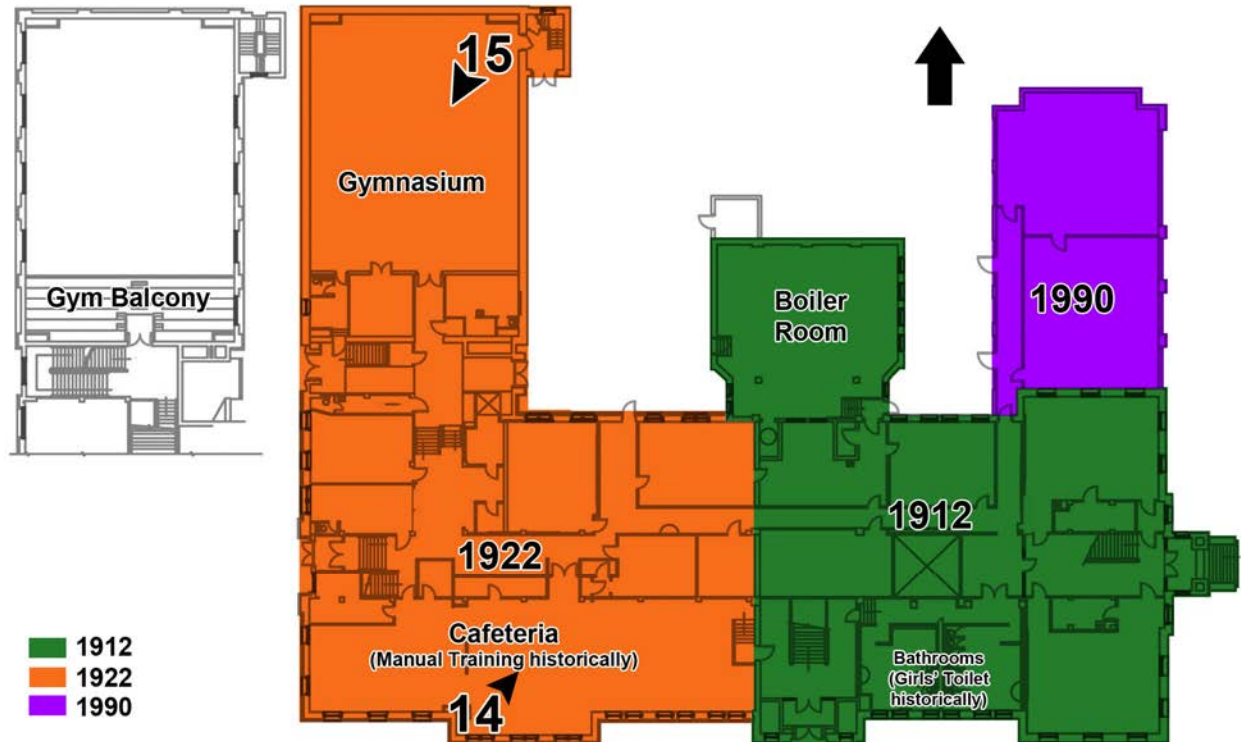
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**Figure 4.** Ladd School Ground Floor and Mezzanine current plans and photo map, annotated with building campaigns and significant spaces. Source: Source: Kansas City Public Schools. "Ladd School As-built Plans." Architectural Drawings, n.d.



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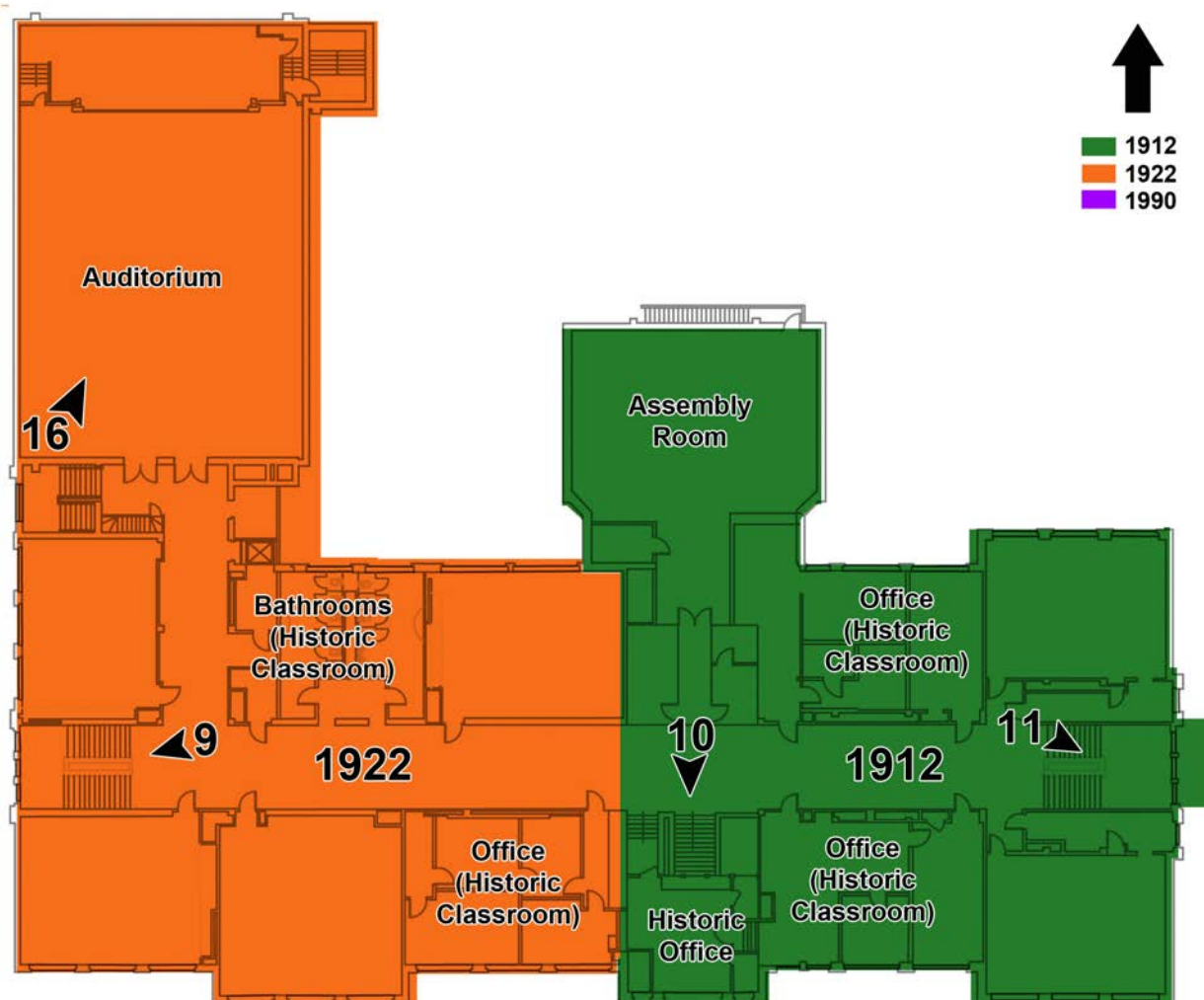
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**Figure 5.** Ladd School First Floor current plans and photo map, annotated with building campaigns and significant spaces. Source: Kansas City Public Schools. "Ladd School As-built Plans." Architectural Drawings, n.d.



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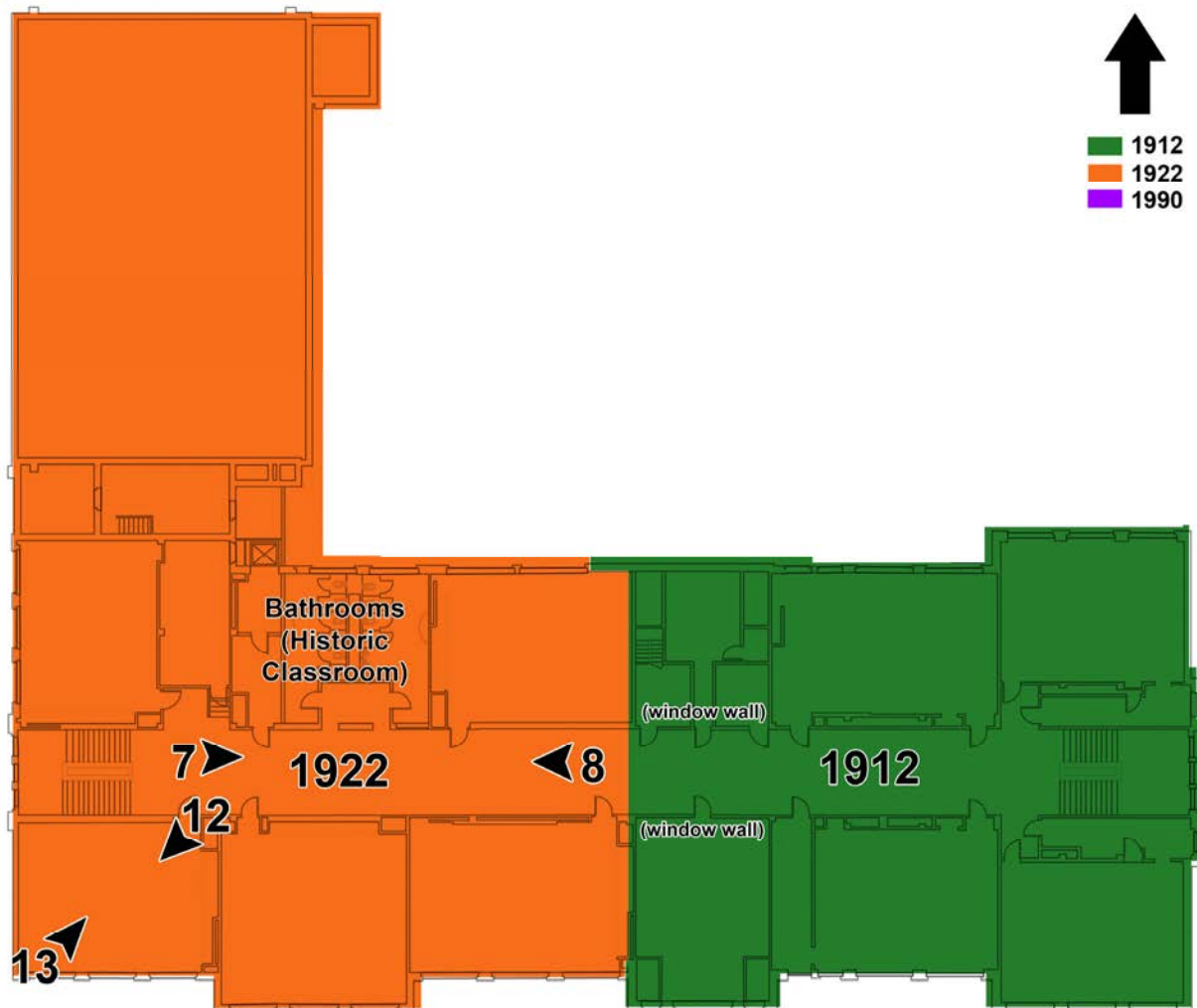
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**Figure 6.** Ladd School Second Floor current plans and photo map, annotated with building campaigns and significant spaces. Source: Source: Kansas City Public Schools. "Ladd School As-built Plans." Architectural Drawings, n.d.



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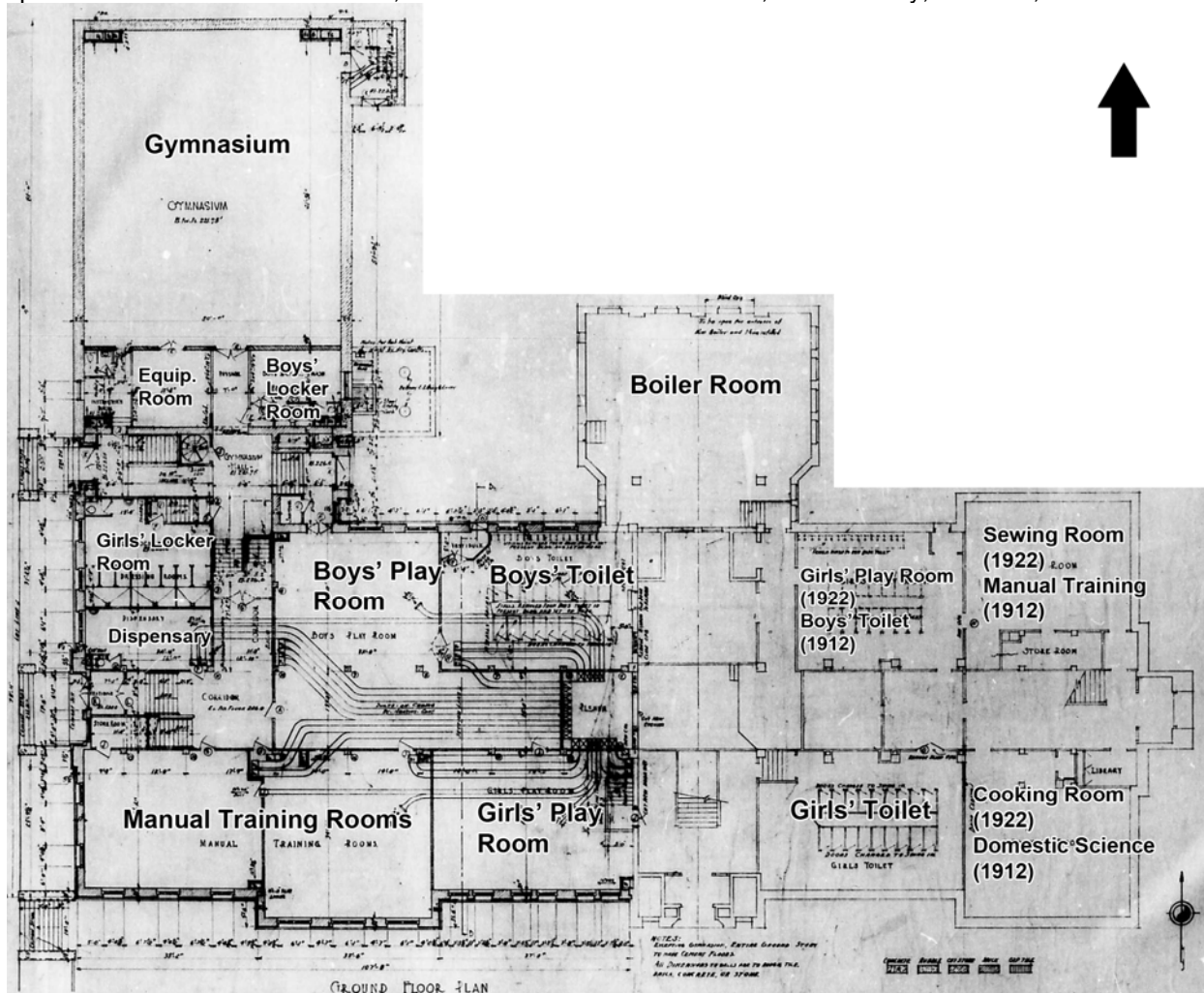
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**Figure 7.** Ladd School Historic Ground Floor, 1912 and 1922 sections, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911-1921.



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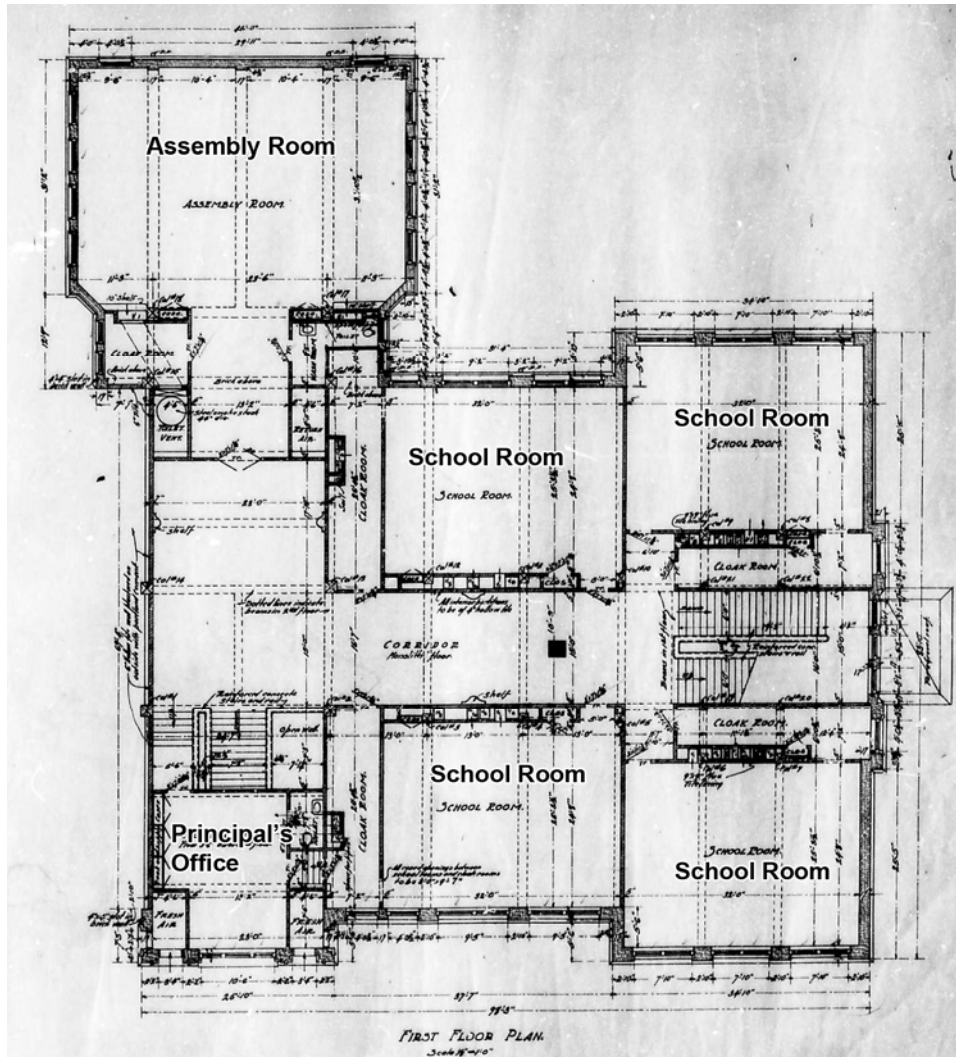
Jackson County, Missouri

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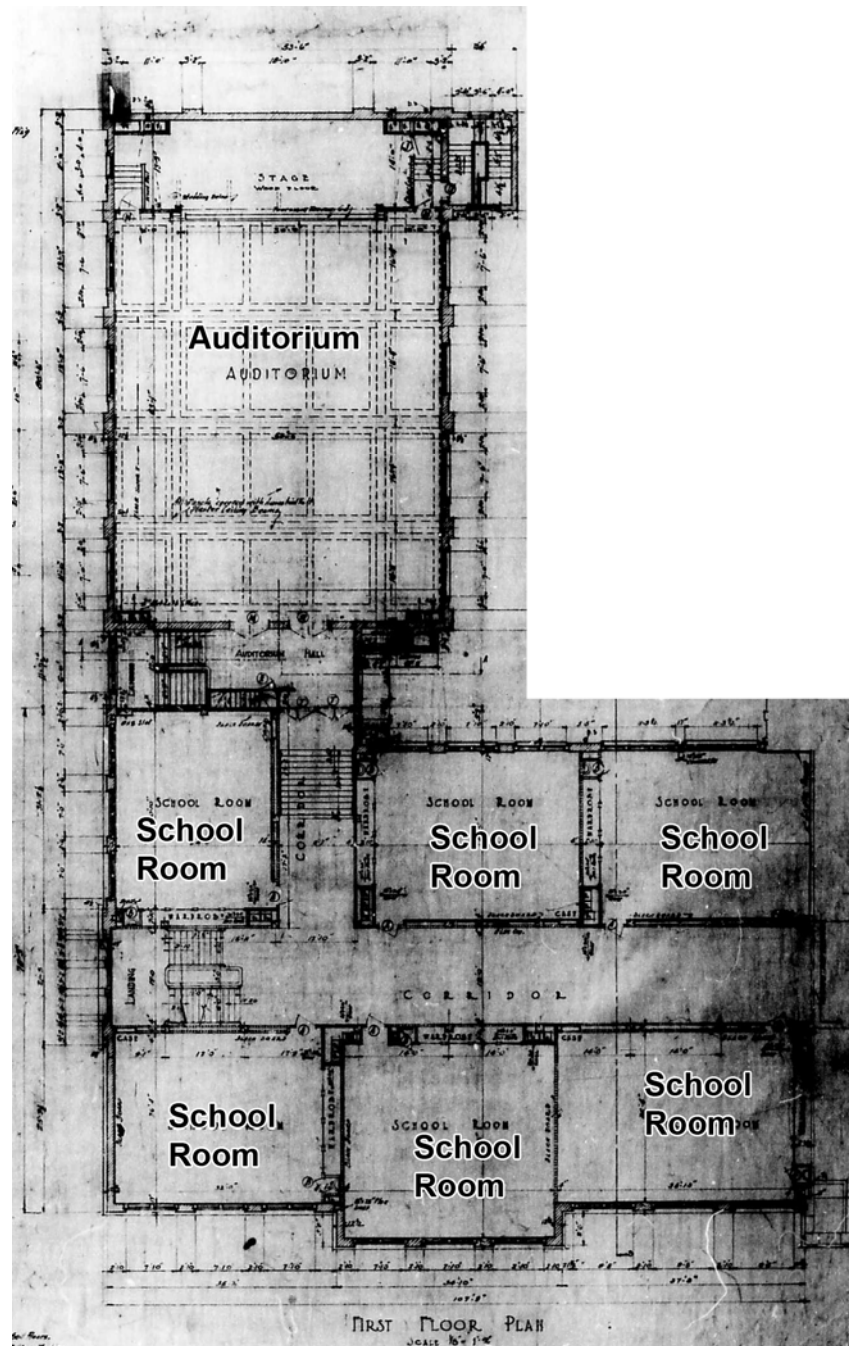
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 8.** Ladd School Historic First Floor, 1912 section, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911.



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**Figure 9.** Ladd School Historic First Floor, 1922 section, plans annotated with significant spaces. Source: Charles A. Smith, “Sanford B. Ladd School Plans,” Kansas City, Missouri, 1922.





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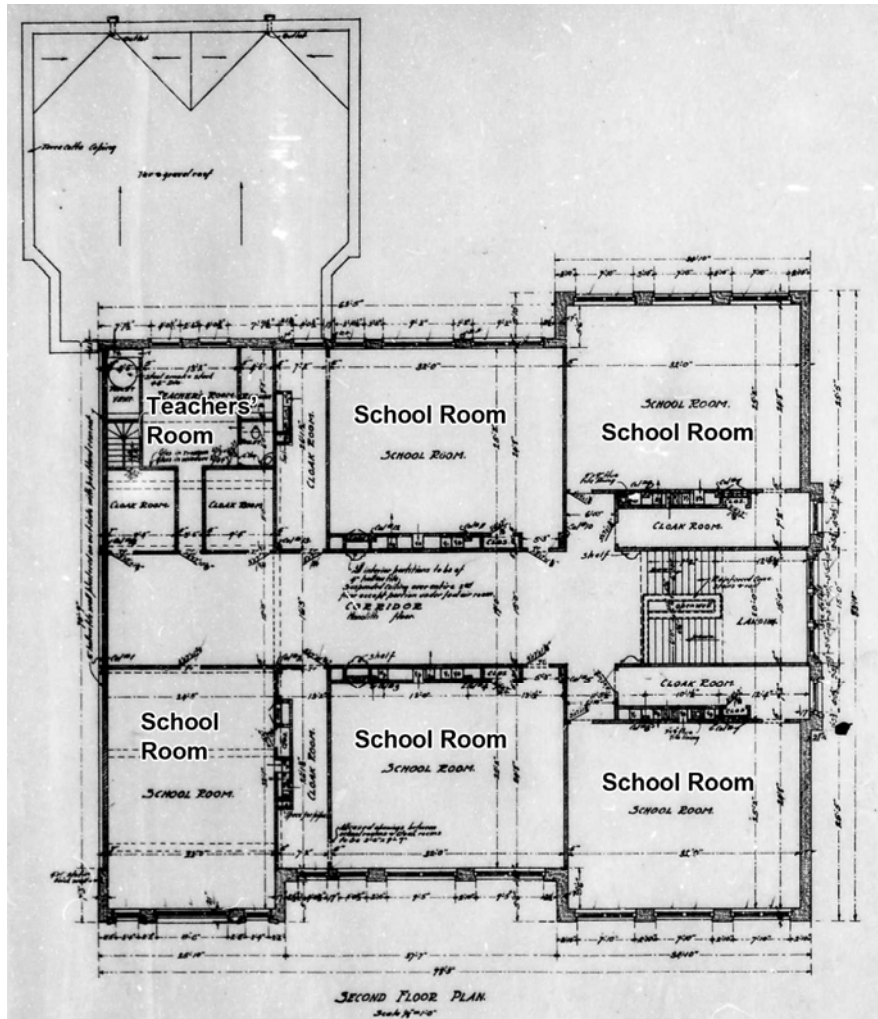
Jackson County, Missouri

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**Figure 10.** Ladd School Historic Second Floor, 1912 section, plans annotated with significant spaces.  
Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911.



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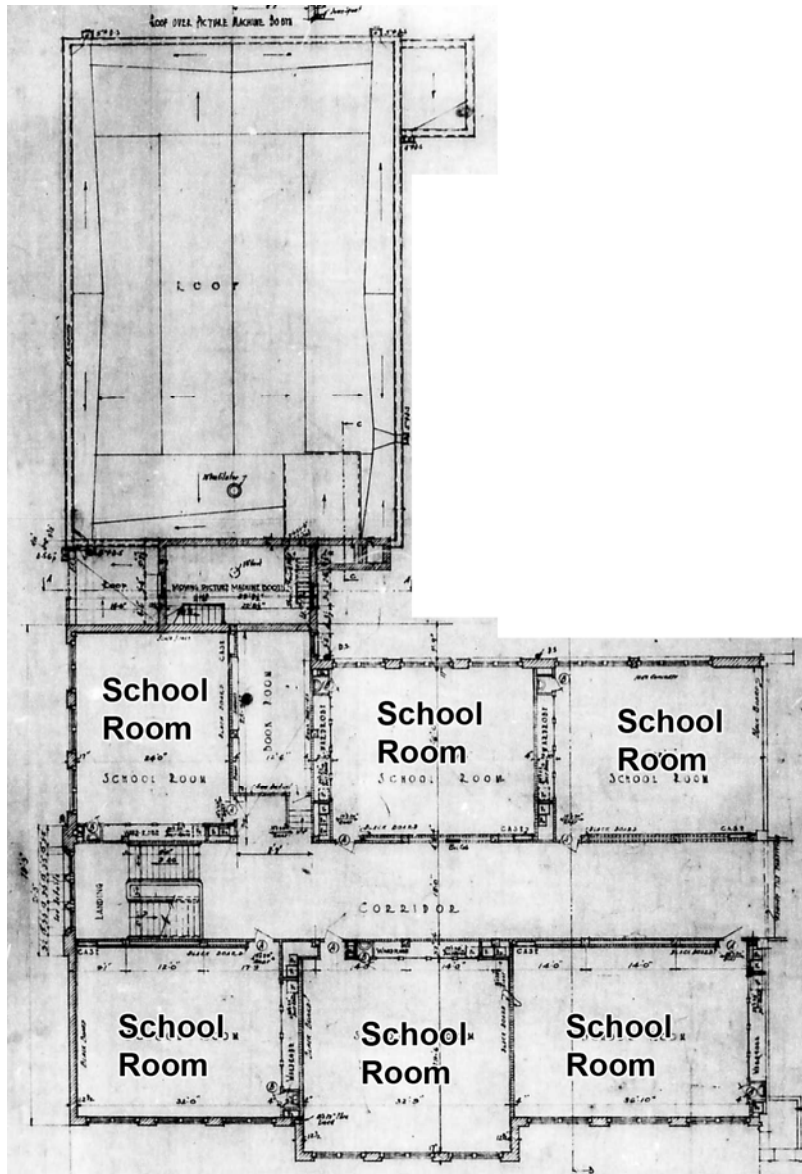
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**Figure 11.** Ladd School Historic Second Floor, 1922 section, plans annotated with significant spaces.  
Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911-1922.





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**Figure 12.** Ladd School, c.1915. Source: Kansas City, Missouri School District Records, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri

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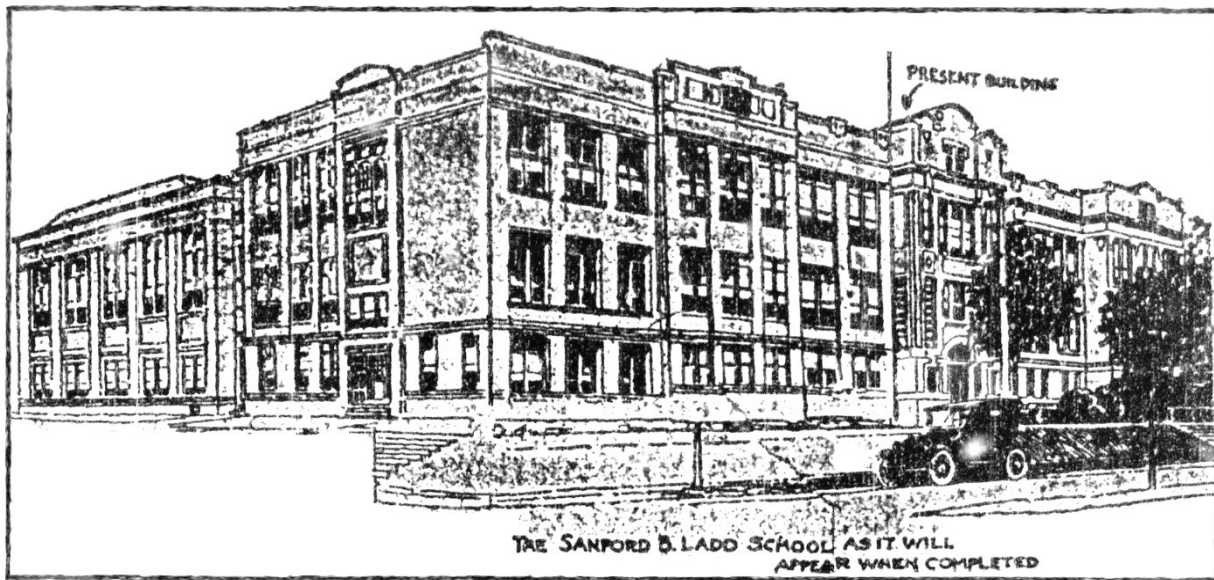
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**Figure 13.** Rendering of completed Ladd School, 1921. Source: "Work Has Begun on Addition to Sanford B. Ladd School," *Kansas City Star*, October 12, 1921.



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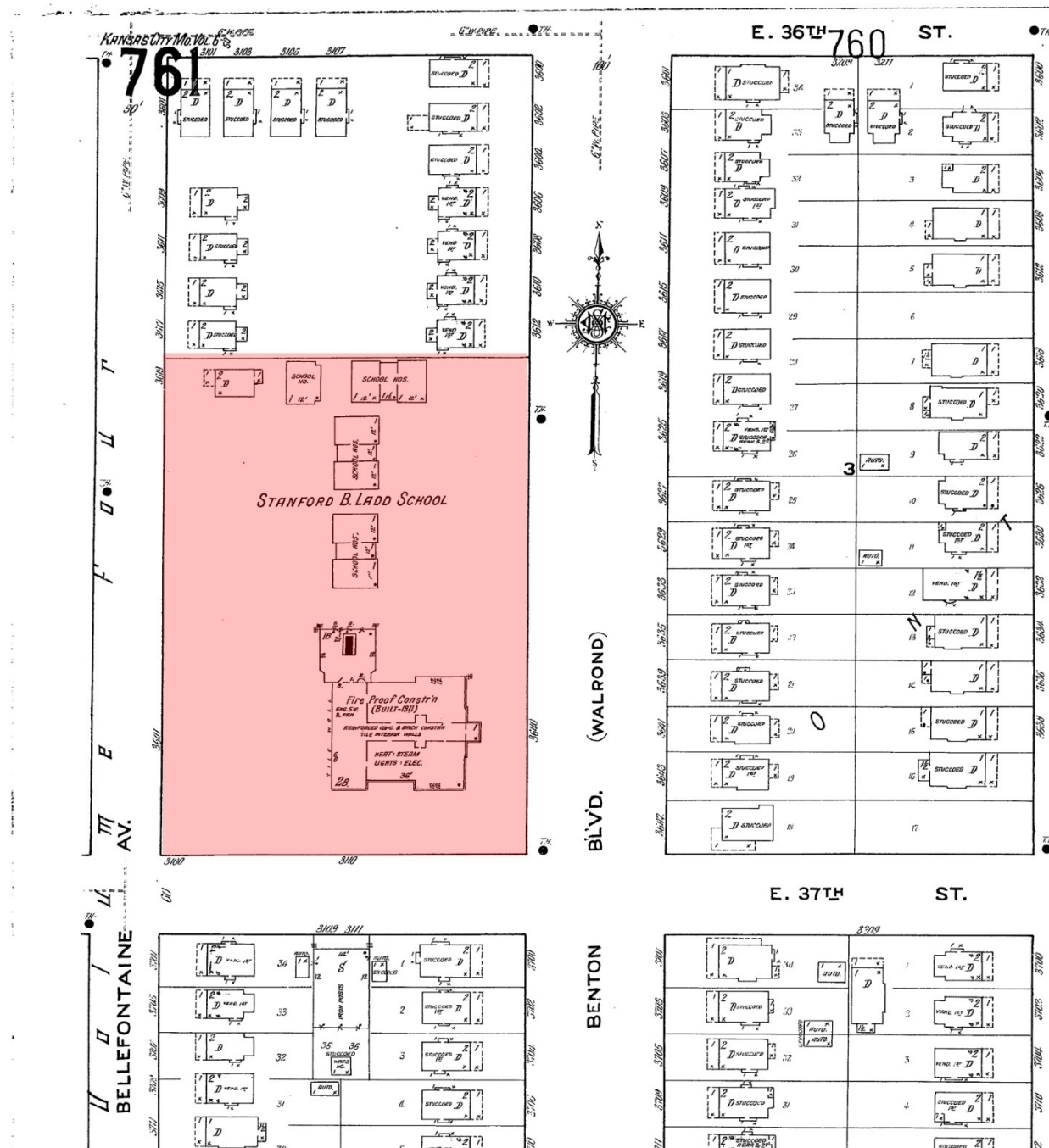
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Figure 14. Detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Kansas City. Vol. 6, Sheet 761, 1917.



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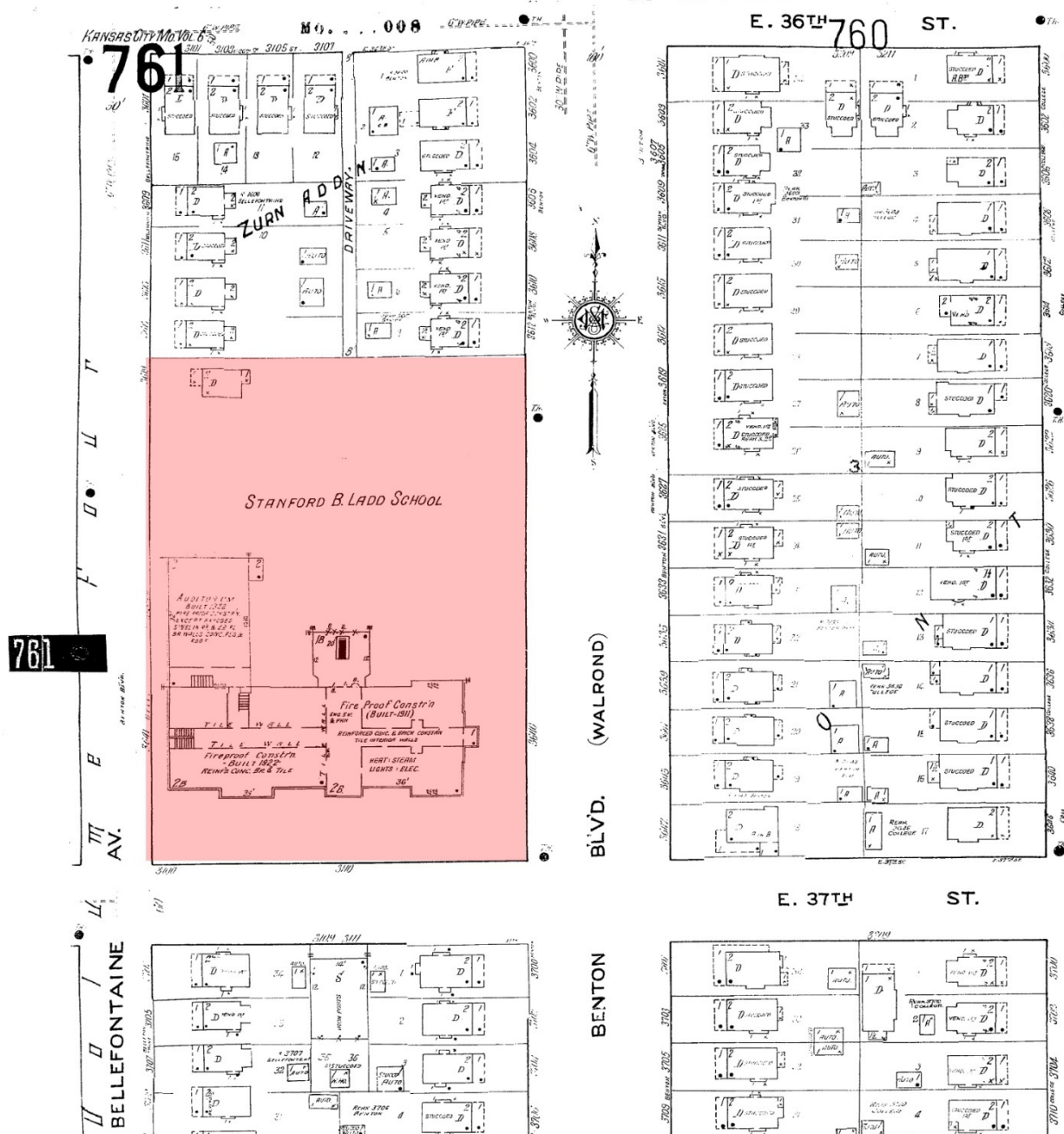
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Figure 15. Detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Kansas City. Vol. 6, Sheet 761, 1950.



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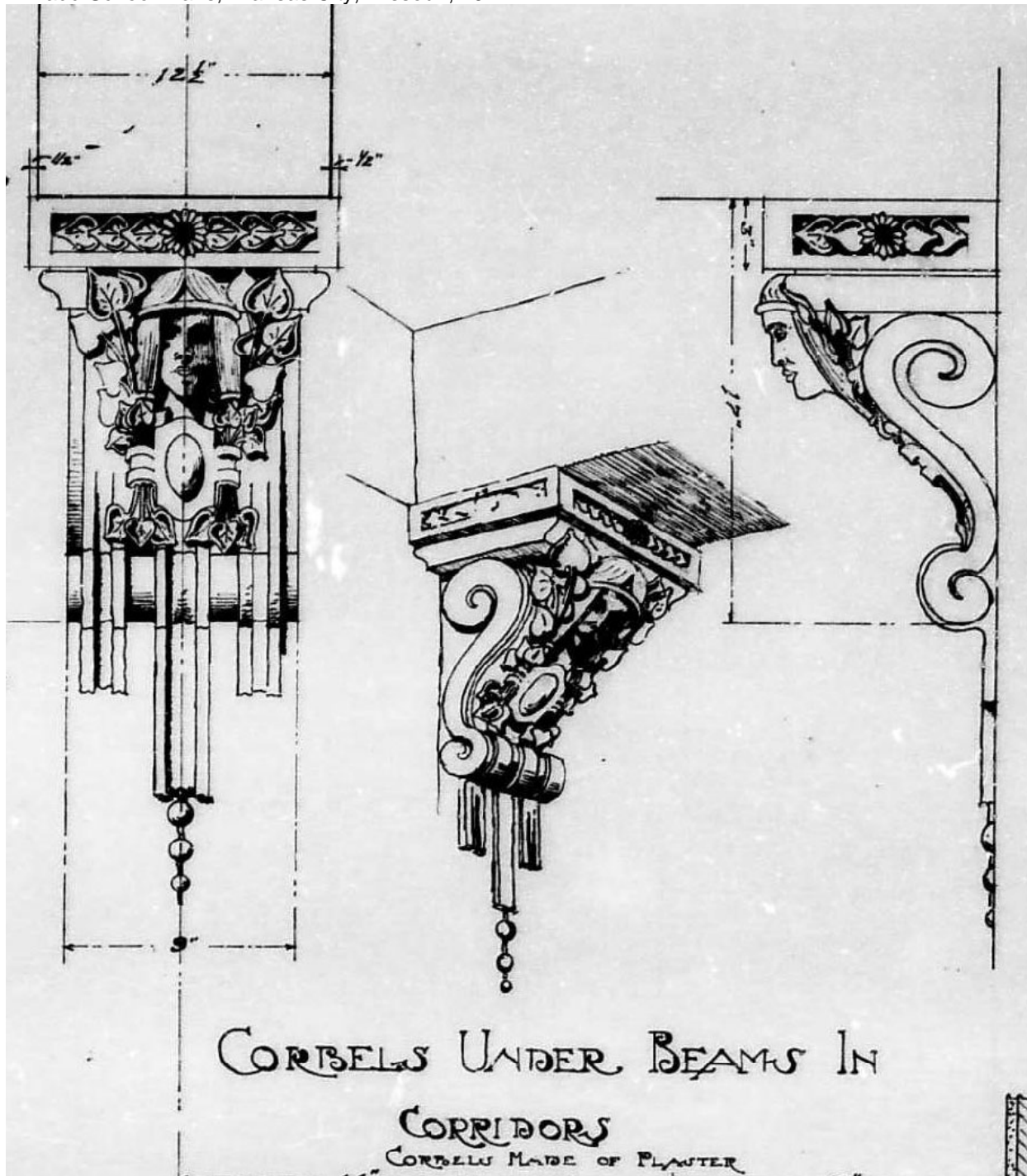
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**Figure 16.** Ladd School Historic corridor corbels detail, 1912 section. Source: Charles A. Smith, "Sanford B. Ladd School Plans," Kansas City, Missouri, 1911.





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**Figure 17.** Detail photo of corbels in 1912 section. *Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.*



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**Figure 18.** Photo of leaded glass doors for built-in cabinets in 1912 classrooms. *Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.*



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**Figure 19.** Photo of historic window wall on south side of second-floor corridor. *Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.*





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**Figure 20.** Photo of historic window wall on north side of second-floor corridor. *Source: f-stop Photography, December 2020.*























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Rm. 200



























